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CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE QUESTIONS OF: TORTURE AND DETENTION

United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. ANNUAL REPORTS

1. In conformity with the arrangements adopted by the General Assembly for the management of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, the Secretary-General draws up an annual report to the General Assembly, indicating the funds available, pledges made and contributions received, together with disbursements from the Fund (resolution 36/151 and document A/36/540).

2. At its fifty-fourth session, in resolution 1998/38 of 17 April 1998, the Commission on Human Rights requested the Secretary-General to continue to keep it informed of the operations of the Fund on an annual basis. The Secretary-General draws the Commission's attention to his annual report on the Fund, submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session (A/53/283), which is available to the Commission and is supplemented by this report.

II. FINANCIAL STATUS

3. At the time of writing of the present report (8 December 1998), from the total amount of US$ 4,210,000 recommended for grants by the Board of Trustees at its seventeenth session (A/53/283, para. 17), US$ 3,606,725 have been paid for medical, psychological, psychiatric, social, humanitarian and legal assistance programmes; US$ 603,275 can still be disbursed before the next session of the Board of Trustees in May 1999, when additional information has been received on programmes already approved for funding or for new urgent grants up to $100,000.

A. Contributions paid

4. As mentioned in the relevant provisions of General Assembly and Commission on Human Rights resolutions, the contributions for each year have to be paid before the beginning of the Board's annual session i.e. by 30 April, in order to be recorded and available for the Board's annual session. Contributions not officially recorded 1/ on the first day of the session will be considered at the following session. Pledges cannot be taken into consideration.

1. Governments

5. In his report to the General Assembly (A/53/283, para. 12), the Secretary-General indicated that US$ 714,275 2/ had been received after 22 May 1998 for allocation at the eighteenth session of the Board of Trustees in May 1999. The contributions shown in the table below were recorded after document A/53/283 was drafted. Most of these contributions were made for 1998, but, since they were received after the annual meeting of the Board in May 1998, the Board will take them into consideration at its eighteenth session, to be held from 17 to 28 May 1999.

State	Amount US$	Date	Intended for	Contr. No.
Chile	10 000	12 November 1998	1999	7
Czech Rep.	3 000	1 December 1998	1998	4
France	83 333	21 September 1998	1998	20
Ireland	66 600	6 November 1998	1998	14
Italy	89 989	10 August 1998	1998	10
Luxembourg	21 378	20 July 1998	1998	15
Nepal	1 000	21 August 1998	1998	2
Philippines a/	6 250	10 September 1998	1998	3
Spain	50 327	14 October 1998	1998	13
Sweden	379 747	25 September 1998	1998	12
United States b/	600 000	20 November 1998	1997	17
"	300 000	20 November 1998	1998	18
TOTAL	1 611 624			

a/ This amount corresponds to the partial payment of a pledge of $10,000.

b/ The United States of America paid an additional contribution of $600,000 for 1997 and another of $300,000 for 1998. These two contributions will be taken into consideration at the eighteenth session of the Board of Trustees in May 1999.

2. Individuals

6. Individuals also contributed US$ 3,851 to the Fund: Mrs. Clare Krebsbach (United States) contributed $50 and Mr. Jamieson (New Zealand), $70. An anonymous contribution of US$ 3,731 was also received.

B. Pledges

7. Government pledges to the Fund can be made directly by letter to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, at the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities held in New York (the most recent Conference was held on 4 and 5 November 1998), at the annual session of the Commission on Human Rights held in Geneva or at information meetings organized for regular donors.

8. An organization in the Netherlands, Leiden Human Rights Association Habeas Corpus, informed the secretariat of the Fund that amounts earmarked for the organization of a conference on human rights which has had to be cancelled would be paid to the Fund in early 1999.

9. The following pledges had not yet been paid as of 8 December 1998:

State	Amount in US$	Amount of contr. in local currency	Announced on	Contr. No.
Algeria	5 000		4 November 1998	7
Andorra	5 000		11 April 1997	4
Brazil	10 000		20 December 1995	7
"	10 000		11 February 1996	8
"	10 000		11 April 1997	9
Greece	10 300		4 November 1998	16
Iceland	5 952		4 November 1998	13
Japan	66 000		4 November 1998	13
Liechtenstein	7 463		4 November 1998	11
Luxembourg	14 706		4 November 1998	16
Monaco	10 870		4 November 1998	6
Netherlands	537 634	f. 1 million	4 November 1998	18
Philippines a/	3 750		11 April 1998	3
"	2 595		4 November 1998	4
Portugal	15 000		26 June 1998	3
Slovenia	2 825	Slt 465 000	28 August 1998	1
Switzerland	32 374	Sw F 45 000	19 May 1998	11
Tunisia	2 000		8 October 1998	8
Total	751 469			

a/ The Government of the Philippines pledged US$ 10,000, of which US$ 6,250 have been paid.

10. The following countries referred to in the above table made their pledges in November 1998 at the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities (see para. 7 above): Algeria, Greece, Iceland, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands and the Philippines.

III. FUND-RAISING

A. Call for funds

11. On 9 October 1998, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Mary Robinson sent a letter to all Governments drawing their attention to the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution A/51/86 of 12 December 1996 and Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/38 of 17 April 1998, in which the Assembly and the Commission expressed their gratitude and appreciation to the Governments that had contributed or pledged a contribution to the Fund to provide assistance to the victims in a purely humanitarian spirit.

12. She wholeheartedly supported the request contained in the above-mentioned resolutions that contributions should be made annually, if possible with a substantial increase in number and level, in order to take into consideration the ever-increasing demand for assistance. She also drew Governments' attention to the request of the Board of Trustees of the Fund to contribute prior to its annual meeting in May.

13. In order to meet all the requests for assistance made in May 1998, the Fund would have needed about US$ 6.8 million, whereas it had only US$ 4.2 million. She expected that at least the same number of requests would be received in 1999. As at 8 December 1998, however, the Fund had received contributions amounting to only US$ 2,329,750.

B. Meeting with regular donors

14. As in past years, the secretariat organized a technical information meeting for regular donors in Geneva on 26 November 1998. The report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly (A/53/283) was distributed, together with all other relevant documents. The secretariat of the Fund answered questions asked by regular donors and suggested that they should pay their pledged contributions by late April.

C. Resolutions

15. In 1998, the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights appealed to all States, organizations and individuals in a position to do so to contribute to the Fund on a regular basis and annually, prior to the meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Fund, if possible, with a substantial increase (see Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/38 of 17 April 1998 and draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.23 adopted by the Third Committee of the General Assembly on 18 November 1998 3/). The draft resolution even suggests that contributions should be paid to the Fund by the end of February at the latest.

IV. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A. Requests received and grants awarded (1993-1998)

16. Since grants requested do not match grants awarded (see table below), the Board of Trustees recommends each year that none of the amounts available in addition to the compulsory reserve should be carried forward for the following year (see A/53/283, para. 11). Each year, the Board therefore recommends that the Secretary-General should allocate the total amounts available. On the High Commissioner's recommendation, the Secretary-General has always followed this recommendation by the Board of Trustees.

Year	Grants requested (US$)	Grants awarded (US$)	% granted	Additional amount required (US$)
1998	6 800 000	4 210 000	61.9	2 590 000
1997	6 800 000	3 036 054	44.64	3 763 946
1996	5 618 645	2 535 500	45.1	3 083 145
1995	5 827 645	2 719 680	46.6	3 107 965
1994	5 476 959	3 698 080	67.5	1 778 879
1993	5 289 413	2 111 880	39.9	3 177 533

B. Estimated needs for 1999

17. The secretariat estimates that the amount requested from the Fund by the organizations concerned in 1999 will be at least as great as that requested in 1998, i.e. $6.8 million, in addition to 13 per cent in programme support costs and 15 per cent earmarked as a reserve. The amount needed will therefore be $8.7 million, from which a total of US$ 2,329,750 has to be subtracted (contributions paid since 22 May 1998 ($714,275; see A/53/283), $1,611,624 received since the publication of the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly and $3,851 received from individuals). An amount of $6,370,250 therefore still has to be found. As the Governments which made pledges of $751,469 were requested by the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights and the High Commissioner to pay by 30 April 1999, $5,618,781 still must be found. The following regular donors to the Fund have not yet paid or pledged a voluntary contribution for 1999:

State	Contribution (US$)	Number of past contributions
Argentina	5 000	9
Australia	60 000	6
Austria	20 000	15
Belgium	82 000	8
Canada	18 000	15
Cyprus	1 000	10
Denmark	290 000	16
Finland	180 000	16
France	83 000	20
Germany	112 000	16
New Zealand	15 000	12
Norway	133 000	13
Republic of Korea	15 000	5
Sweden	380 000	12
United Kingdom	200 000	10
United States	1 500 000	16
TOTAL:	3 094 000	

18. If these regular donors paid a further contribution by 30 April 1999, an additional amount of $2,524,781 would still have to be collected from new contributors to the Fund and/or regular contributors prepared to increase their contributions.

19. The Permanent Mission of the United States to the United Nations Office at Geneva and several United States centres for the treatment of victims of torture have informed the secretariat of the Fund that the United States Congress (House of Representatives and Senate) has adopted legislation entitled "Torture Victims Relief Act of 1998" (see annex I) and authorizing the President of the United States to allocate $3 million to the Fund in 1999 and in 2000 as multilateral assistance for victims of torture ($1,500,000 more than in 1998). One of the provisions of the Act also provides nationally for $5 million in 1999 and $7.5 million in 2000 for rehabilitation centres for victims of torture located in the United States. An identical amount is earmarked for treatment centres for victims of torture located abroad. If the President signs the recommendation by the Congress and decides to pay $3 million for 1999 by 30 April 1999, the Fund would still need an additional amount of about $1 million to meet all requests.

V. PUBLIC INFORMATION

20. An information meeting for non-governmental organizations taking part in the work of the Sub-Commission in August was organized by the secretariat on the activities of the Fund and, in particular, on project selection criteria, the methods of work of the secretariat and the Board of Trustees, the Fund's guidelines, the schedule of submission of requests for grants, the payment of grants and the submission of narrative and financial reports on the use of grants.

21. In its resolution 52/149 of December 1997, the General Assembly proclaimed 26 June United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. Information on the activities organized by the secretariat to commemorate this day is contained in document A/53/283 (paras. 25 and 26 and annexes I and II).

22. The High Commissioner specially recorded a video message which was broadcast simultaneously at United Nations Headquarters in New York and at the United Nations Office at Geneva on that day. On 25 June in Geneva, the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights inaugurated an exhibit of works by victims of torture, which was held at the Palais des Nations and during which some 100 paintings, posters, drawings, photographs and sculptures were shown. They were sent to the secretariat of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture by about 30 organizations which were providing the victims and their families in many countries with medical, psychological, social, financial and legal assistance through the support of the Fund.

23. The following organizations contributed to the exhibit:

Aid for Children in Crisis (South Africa); Amigos de los Sobrevivientes (United States); Association pour les victimes de répression en exil (AVRE, France); Behandlungs Zentrum für Folteropfer (BZFO, Germany); Commission Africaine des Promoteurs de la Santé et des Droits de l'Homme (CAPSDH, Burundi); Fundación Social Colombiana (CEDAVIDA, Colombia); Centre for Victims of Torture (Nepal); Centre for Rehabilitation of War and Torture Victims (Sweden); Centro de Estudios Fronterizos y de Promoción de los Derechos Humanos (CEFPRODHAC, Mexico); Centro de Salud Mental y Derechos Humanos (CINTRAS, Chile); Comité de Defensa para los Derechos del Pueblo (CODEPU, Chile); Comité para la Defensa de la Salud, la Etica Profesional y los Derechos Humanos (CODESEDH, Argentina); Comisión de Derechos Humanos de El Salvador; Swedish Red Cross; Estonian Center for Medical Rehabilitation for Victims of Torture; Exil (Belgium); Family Rehabilitation Center (Sri Lanka); Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance (FIND, Philippines); Fundación Ecuménica para el Desarrollo y la Paz (FEDEPAZ, Peru); International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT, Denmark); Justice pour Tazmamart (France); Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture (United Kingdom); Medical Foundation (Uganda); Programme for Torture Victims (PTV, United States); Réseau d'intervention auprès des personnes ayant subi la violence organisée (RIVO, Canada); Sudanese Victims of Torture Group (SVTG, United Kingdom); Fund for Social Jurisprudence Research (TOHAV, Turkey); Treatment and Rehabilitation Unit for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (TRUSTT, Australia); Zentrum für sozialmedizinischen, rechtslichen und kulturellen Betreuung von Ausländern (ZEBRA, Austria).

24. The subjects of the art works shown included torture of women and children, different methods of torture, reintegration into "normal" life despite the lasting effects of torture and the need to adapt in a host country whose language, culture and way of life are different. The documentation distributed to persons who visited the exhibit included article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, relating to torture, article 1 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, containing the definition of torture under the Convention, and the Joint Declaration adopted on 19 May 1998 by the Committee against Torture, the Board of Trustees of the Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, the Special Rapporteur on questions relating to torture and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (see A/53/283, annex I).

25. The exhibit also showed posters sent in by several organizations. Another part of the exhibit was a set of black and white photographs taken by Mr. Nori S. Mahhdi and symbolizing the general theme of torture.

26. In the video part of the exhibit, visitors watched the above-mentioned message from the High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as films on the treatment of victims of torture and the training of torturers, such as "Raisons d'Etat" by Mrs. Isábelle Benkemoun and Mr. Marc Allegret (Les Films d'Ici SA, Paris), "Malgré Tout" (Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture, RCT, Copenhagen) and "Your Neighbour's Son" (Amnesty International, London).

27. The secretariat of the Fund was informed of other activities organized by non-governmental organizations, including:

(a) The Centre for Victims of Torture (Minnesota, United States): visit by the Secretary-General of the United Nations;

(b) AVRE (Association pour les victimes de répression en exil, Paris): prize-giving ceremony for the winners of a French lycée students' essay writing contest on the topic of torture;

(c) The Medical Foundation (London): the Director, Mrs. Helen Bamber, organized a press conference to launch the second edition of "Medicine Betrayed, the Participation of Doctors in Human Rights Abuses", a book used by doctors working with torture victims;

(d) CINTRAS (Centro de Salud Mental y Derechos Humanos, Chile): press conference at Villa Grimaldi, a former torture centre, with the participation of other human rights organizations.

28. In the above-mentioned Third Committee draft resolution, the General Assembly reiterated its request that the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture should be commemorated each year on 26 June. New initiatives would therefore be organized in 1999. The International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT, Copenhagen) informed the secretariat that the topic chosen for 1999 would be "action to combat impunity".

29. On 28 November 1998, the United Nations Staff Coordinating Council in Geneva decided that, in 1998, the proceeds from the organization of the Staff

Gala of the United Nations Office at Geneva would go to the Fund for Victims of Torture. Information on the Fund and a message from the High Commissioner for Human Rights (see annex II) were made available to United Nations staff and members of Permanent Missions who went to the Gala.

VI. HOW TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION

30. Governments, individuals and non-governmental organizations were invited by the Commission on Human Rights to contribute to the Fund before the next session of the Board of Trustees, i.e. by 30 April 1999. Any contribution received after this date will be recorded in the accounts for the next year and can therefore not be taken into consideration for programme assistance in 1999.

31. To contribute to the Fund by bank transfer, pay to: "United Nations Geneva General Fund" in United States dollars: UBS AG New York, account No. CO-590-160.1, Swift address: SBCOUS33; or in Swiss francs: UBS AG, P.O. Box 2770, CH-1211 Genève 2, account No. CO-590-160.0, Swift address: SBCOCHGG12A.

32. Payment may also be made by cheque, payable to "the United Nations", addressed to: Trésorerie, ONU, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Genève 10, or to: Treasury, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, USA.

33. In all cases, please specify the following: "Payee: United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, account CH".

Notes

1/ An official United Nations receipt issued by the Treasurer is sent to each donor.

2/ The total amount indicated in paragraph 12 of the report is correct. The contributions of Australia and Germany should be amended to read "$60,620" (instead of "$50,000") and "$112,359" (instead of "$60,620").

3/ The corresponding General Assembly resolution was not available at the time of drafting of the present report; it will appear as document A/RES/53/139 of 9 December 1998.

Annex I

TORTURE VICTIMS RELIEF ACT OF 1998 (UNITED STATES)

One Hundred Fifth Congress of the United States of America

At the second session

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Tuesday, the twenty-seventh day of January one thousand nine hundred and ninety-eight

An Act

To provide a comprehensive program of support for victims of torture

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE

This Act may be cited as the "Torture Victims Relief Act of 1998".

SECTION 2. FINDINGS

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The American people abhor torture by any government or person. The existence of torture creates a climate of fear and international insecurity that affects all people.

(2) Torture is the deliberate mental and physical damage caused by governments to individuals to destroy individual personality and terrorize society. The effects of torture are long term. Those effects can last a lifetime for the survivors and affect future generations.

(3) By eliminating the leadership of their opposition and frightening the general public, repressive governments often use torture as a weapon against democracy.

(4) Torture survivors remain under physical and psychological threats, especially in communities where the perpetrators are not brought to justice. In many nations, even those who treat torture survivors are threatened with reprisals, including torture, for carrying out their ethical duty to provide care. Both the survivors of torture and their treatment providers should be accorded protection from further repression.

(5) A significant number of refugees and asylees entering the United States have been victims of torture. Those claiming asylum deserve prompt consideration of their applications for political asylum to minimize their insecurity and sense of danger. Many torture

survivors now live in the United States. They should be provided with the rehabilitation services which would enable them to become productive members of our communities.

(6) The development of a treatment movement for torture survivors has created new opportunities for action by the United States and other nations to oppose state-sponsored and other acts of torture.

(7) There is a need for a comprehensive strategy to protect and support torture victims and their treatment providers, together with overall efforts to eliminate torture.

(8) By acting to heal the survivors of torture and protect their families, the United States can help to heal the effects of torture and prevent its use around the world.

SECTION 3. DEFINITION

As used in this Act, the term "torture" has the meaning given the term in section 2340(1) of title 18, United States Code, and includes the use of rape and other forms of sexual violence by a person acting under the color of law upon another person under his custody or physical control.

SECTION 4. FOREIGN TREATMENT CENTERS

(a) AMENDMENTS TO THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1961. Part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end of chapter 1 the following new section:

"SEC. 129. ASSISTANCE FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE

"(a) IN GENERAL. The President is authorized to provide assistance for the rehabilitation of victims of torture.

"(b) ELIGIBILITY FOR GRANTS. Such assistance shall be provided in the form of grants to treatment centers and programs in foreign countries that are carrying out projects or activities specifically designed to treat victims of torture for the physical and psychological effects of the torture.

"(c) USE OF FUNDS. Such assistance shall be available:

(1) for direct services to victims of torture; and

(2) to provide research and training to health care providers outside of treatment centers or programs described in subsection (b), for the purpose of enabling such providers to provide the services described in paragraph (1)."

(b) FUNDING

(1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS. Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated for fiscal years 1999 and 2000 pursuant to chapter 1 of part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, there are authorized to be appropriated to the President $5,000,000 for fiscal year 1999 and $7,500,000 for fiscal year 2000 to carry out section 129 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as added by subsection (a).

(2) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS. Amounts appropriated pursuant to this subsection shall remain available until expended.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE. The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect October 1, 1998.

SECTION 5. DOMESTIC TREATMENT CENTERS

(a) ASSISTANCE FOR TREATMENT OF TORTURE VICTIMS. The Secretary of Health and Human Services may provide grants to programs in the United States to cover the cost of the following services:

(1) Services for the rehabilitation of victims of torture, including treatment of the physical and psychological effects of torture.

(2) Social and legal services for victims of torture.

(3) Research and training for health care providers outside of treatment centers, or programs for the purpose of enabling such providers to provide the services described in paragraph (1).

(b) FUNDING

(1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS. Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated for the Department of Health and Human Services for fiscal years 1999 and 2000, there are authorized to be appropriated to carry out subsection (a) (relating to assistance for domestic centers and programs for the treatment of victims of torture) $5,000,000 for fiscal year 1999, and $7,500,000 for fiscal year 2000.

(2) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS. Amounts appropriated pursuant to this subsection shall remain available until expended.

SECTION 6. MULTILATERAL ASSISTANCE

(a) FUNDING. Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated for fiscal years 1999 and 2000 pursuant to chapter 3 of part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, there are authorized to be appropriated to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (in this section referred to as the "Fund") the following amounts for the following fiscal years:

(1) FISCAL YEAR 1999: For fiscal year 1999, $3,000,000.

(2) FISCAL YEAR 2000: For fiscal year 2000, $3,000,000.

(b) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS. Amounts appropriated pursuant to subsection (a) shall remair available until expended.

(c) SENSE OF THE CONGRESS. It is the sense of the Congress that the President, acting through the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations, should

(1) request the Fund

(A) to find new ways to support and protect treatment centers and programs that are carrying out rehabilitative services for victims of torture; and

(B) to encourage the development of new such centers and programs;

(2) use the voice and vote of the United States to support the work of the Special Rapporteur on Torture and the Committee Against Torture established under the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; and

(3) use the voice and vote of the United States to establish a country rapporteur or similar procedural mechanism to investigate human rights violations in a country if either the Special Rapporteur or the Committee Against Torture indicates that a systematic practice of torture is prevalent in that country.

SECTION 7. SPECIALIZED TRAINING FOR FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS

(a) IN GENERAL. The Secretary of State shall provide training for foreign service officers with respect to

(1) the identification of torture;

(2) the identification of the surrounding circumstances in which torture is most often practiced;

(3) the long-term effects of torture upon a victim;

(4) the identification of the physical, cognitive, and emotional effects of torture, and the manner in which these effects can affect the interview or hearing process; and

(5) the manner of interviewing victims of torture so as not to retraumatize them, eliciting the necessary information to document the torture experience, and understanding the difficulties victims often have in recounting their torture experience.

(b) GENDER-RELATED CONSIDERATIONS. In conducting training under subsection (a) (4) or (5), gender-specific training shall be provided on the subject of interacting with women and men who are victims of torture by rape or any other form of sexual violence.

Speaker of the House of Representatives
(signed)

Vice President of the United States
(signed)

President of the Senate
(signed)

Annex II

MESSAGE FROM MRS. MARY ROBINSON,
UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS,
TO THE STAFF GALA, UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA,
28 NOVEMBER 1998

"The Staff Gala of UNOG, organized by the Staff Coordinating Council, is a rather special event this year on the occasion of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture will benefit from the proceeds of the Gala.

Torture is one of the vilest acts to be perpetrated by human beings upon one another.

The proceeds paid in to the Fund will contribute to projects providing medical, psychological, social, humanitarian and legal assistance to victims of torture and members of their families worldwide.

Helping these victims lead a normal life is one of the goals of the General Assembly when establishing the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. Your presence at the Gala will be a demonstration of solidarity with these men, women and children who still suffer physically and psychologically from the after-effects of torture and the impunity of their torturers."